

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE PREVENTION POLICY

The State of Connecticut has adopted a statewide zero tolerance policy for workplace violence. The Department of Social Services fully supports this policy and recognizes the right of its employees to work in a safe and secure environment that is characterized by respect and professionalism.

Prohibited Conduct

Except as may be required as a condition of employment:

- No employee shall bring into any state worksite any weapon or dangerous instrument as defined herein.
- No employee shall use, attempt to use, or threaten to use any such weapon or dangerous instrument in a state worksite.
- No employee shall cause, or threaten to cause death or physical injury to any individual in a state worksite.

In addition, the Department of Social Services prohibits all conduct, either verbal or physical, that is abusive, threatening, intimidating or demeaning.

Definitions

"Weapon" means any firearm, including a BB gun, whether loaded or unloaded, any knife (excluding a small pen or pocket knife), including a switchblade or other knife having an automatic spring release device, a stiletto, any police baton, or nightstick, any martial arts weapon or electronic defense weapon.

"Dangerous Instrument" means any instrument, article, or substance that, under the circumstances, is capable of causing death or serious physical injury.

Confiscation of Weapons and Dangerous Instruments

Any weapon or dangerous instrument at the worksite will be confiscated and there is no reasonable expectation of privacy with respect to such items in the workplace.

Reporting Procedures

- **Emergency Situations:** Any employee who believes that there is a serious threat to his/her safety or the safety of others that requires immediate attention should contact 911. The employee must also contact his/her **immediate supervisor** or the **Human Resources Office** at Department of Social Services, (860) 424-5060.

Please note that when 911 is dialed from a hard line, the local police authority will respond. When dialing from a cell phone, 911 will connect you directly to the nearest State Police Troop.

- **Non-Emergency Situations:** Any employee who feels subjected to or witnesses violent, threatening, harassing, or intimidating behavior in the workplace should immediately report

the incident or statement to his/her supervisor or manager, the Human Resources Office, or the Department of Social Services.


- **Supervisors/Managers Responsibilities:** Any manager or supervisor who receives a report of violent, threatening, harassing, or intimidating behavior shall immediately contact the Human Resources Office so that office may evaluate, investigate, and take appropriate action.

Investigation and Corrective Action

- The Department of Social Services will promptly investigate all reports or alleged incidents of violent, threatening, harassing or intimidating behavior.
- All employees are expected to cooperate fully in all such investigations.
- Any employee suspected of violating this policy may be placed immediately on administrative leave pending the results of the investigation.
- If the claims of violent, threatening, harassing or intimidating conduct are substantiated, or if it is found that the employee has otherwise violated this policy, the employee will be dealt with through the appropriate disciplinary process, and may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal from state service.
- Where the situation warrants, the Department of Social Services will request that the appropriate law enforcement agencies become involved in the investigation of the matter, and the Department of Social Services may seek prosecution of conduct that violates the law.

Enforcement of the Policy

This policy will be prominently posted for all agency employees.



Commissioner or Designee

1/19/2016

Date

Checklist for Human Resources Offices

HR offices in each Executive Branch agency or office, in order to ensure compliance with the Violence in the Workplace Policy and Procedures Manual, are required to fill out the following Checklist. The agency HR Professional must place a check mark (✓) in the box signifying compliance. This checklist is to be signed and dated by the HR Professional and the Agency Head (or his/her designee) and submitted to the DAS Director of Safety and Security annually, not later than January 31 for the year prior.

Department of Social Services


- ☒ The Violence in the Workplace Policy Prevention Policy (Appendix A of the State of Connecticut Violence in the Workplace Policy and Procedures Manual, hereinafter the "Manual") has been customized with agency-specific information.
- ☒ The agency's Policy has been distributed to agency employees and it has been posted in prominent places throughout the agency, per page 16 of the Manual.
- ☒ The agency's Policy is included in the agency's employee orientation documentation and procedures.
- ☒ Agency-specific, TAT team and protocol are listed on DSS Intranet (which is in printable format), have been prepared and distributed, per page 16 of the Manual.
- ☒ A Threat Assessment Team (TAT) is protocol is attached and in compliance with page 17 of the Manual.
- ☒ Ongoing workplace assessments and prevention strategies have been established, per page 17 of the Manual.
- ☒ All new full-time employees of the agency, hired after January 1, 2012, have been provided or are scheduled to receive, mandatory workplace violence prevention training within six months of hire, pursuant to Public Act 11-33.
- ☒ All full-time employees of the agency hired prior January 1, 2012, have been provided or are scheduled to receive, mandatory workplace violence prevention training pursuant to Public Act 11-33.
- ☒ All other necessary training and education needs have been assessed and provided, per page 17 of the Manual.

- ☒ All complaints were responded to and investigated. Any necessary response procedures were implemented, per page 16 of the Manual.
- ☒ Regular reviews of emergency and non-emergency (threatening) incidents were conducted and monitored to ensure their effectiveness, per page 17 of the Manual.
- ☒ Coordinated with Threat Assessment Team on number and type of incidences for required reports to DAS Statewide Security.

Establishment of Agency's Threat Assessment Team:

- Establish a TAT team to handle workplace violence complaints
 - Labor Relations Liaison reviews' workplace violence reports and determines if TAT team needs to be called.
 - TAT Team members will vary based on where alleged workplace violence incident occurred.
 - ❖ Regional Office TAT team SSOM's, SSPM's, HR Generalist and Labor Representative.
 - ❖ Central Office TAT team will be Director of Division, Manager or Unit, HR Generalist and Labor Representative.
 - ❖ All incidents requiring TAT assembly will include a representative from Labor Relations Unit (which is a Liaison for OLR), Affirmative Action, Regional Management, and Operations.
 - Three major functions of the team include: Identifying the potential for violence in your organization, determining ways to prevent potentially violent incidents and responding to individual acts of violence.

 1/19/2016
 Human Resources Professional Date

 1/19/2016
 Commissioner or Designee Date

Return to:
 DAS Director of Safety and Security
 165 Capitol Avenue, Room 432
 Hartford, Connecticut 06106

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

THE THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM

The Threat Assessment Team (TAT) is responsible for handling workplace violence complaints regarding behaviors and activities that violate this policy, assessing the agency's vulnerability to workplace violence, and reaching agreement on preventative actions.

Membership

TAT members may include:

HR Professional	Marybeth Bonsignore and Jessica Hajdasz	(860) 424-5060
EAP Provider	Solutions, Inc.	(800) 526-3485
Facility Operations	Dottie Dilernia	(860) 424-5056
DAS Statewide Security (as needed)	Ray Philbrick	(860) 713-5811
Risk Management Personnel	Robin Stewart	(860) 823-5070
Legal Counsel	Brenda Parrella	(860) 424-5104
Affirmative Action	Astread Ferron-Poole and Terri-Lynn Johnston	(860) 424-5501
Representative from the statewide Office of Labor Relations (available for consultation as needed)		(860) 418-6289
Representative from the Office of Victim Advocate (available for consultation as needed)		(860) xxx-xxxx
Ad Hoc manager (the manager of the person reporting the incident or a designee)		(860) xxx-xxxx
If dealing with a member of a union, it may be helpful to have a high ranking union official involved	Marybeth Bonsignore and Jessica Hajdasz	(860) 424-5060

When choosing team members, select decision-makers that have the necessary skills to complement the team.

All employees should be provided with an opportunity to personally meet the members of this team to show management's commitment to deal with incidents and to raise the comfort level of employees in seeking assistance from team members.

Role of Threat Assessment Team

This team will be addressing threats as well as incidents of actual violence. One goal of this team approach is to ensure that people are prepared to work together to deal with these situations. Although violence cannot always be prevented, planning ahead and being prepared to act swiftly to deal with threats, intimidation and other disruptive behaviors at an early stage can reduce the risk. In assisting the HR office, the team has three major functions:

1. **Identifying the potential for violence** – identify and analyze any apparent trend in incidents relating to particular units, jobs, activities, time of day and so forth.
2. **Prevention** – adopt procedures agency wide to prevent the occurrence of violence, recommend/implement employee training programs on workplace violence, communicate internally with employees, inspect the workplace, evaluate the work tasks of employees to determine risk levels, conduct follow-up audits, conduct employee surveys, advise on improvements in physical measures, equipment, and work practices, etc.
3. **Responding to individual acts of violence** – incidents will be reported to and evaluated by the Threat Assessment Team. The team will guide the investigation and intervention process as it deems appropriate. This may entail planning a response and mitigating further damage, coordinating responses with law enforcement and the community, managing the media, and inspecting the workplace periodically to discover and correct hazards.

Availability

All employees should be able to obtain help or assistance from any member of the Threat Assessment Team and from the HR office. Agencies shall make a provision for workers who work second or third shift or on weekends to obtain this assistance. There are three ways to do this. One way is to select team members who can provide this type of coverage. A second way is to provide an off-hours phone (landline or cell) number to access a team member. Third, alternate or backup team members who are available should be identified.

Small Agencies

Smaller agencies that are unable to convene a full Threat Assessment Team should establish a relationship with an agency that can assist in providing support resources to them.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Human Resource (HR) Office or Professional

The HR office is responsible for helping all employees deal with violent, threatening, harassing, intimidating or other disruptive behavior in the workplace. The HR office shall be responsible for the following:

Prepare and Disseminate the Agency's Workplace Violence Prevention Policy.

- Customize the statewide Violence in the Workplace Policy (Appendix A) with agency-specific information, including the phone numbers of your agency's HR office, agency police and building security. Print Policy on agency letterhead.
- Post and distribute Policy to all employees. Policies should be posted in prominent places such as bulletin boards, offices, and newsletter articles through the agency.
- Include policy in agency's employee orientation packet.

Investigate Complaints and Take Prompt, Remedial Action.

- Respond to and investigate all complaints in a timely manner. Appendix F includes guidance on how to conduct an investigation and Appendix G includes suggestions about interviewing a potentially violent employee.
- Take any necessary action to protect employees from harm during the course of any investigation.
- Take prompt, remedial action after each investigation, as appropriate, and based upon the results of the investigation.
- Advise witnesses that, while the matters discussed during the investigation will be treated discreetly by HR to the extent possible and allowable by law, they cannot promise absolute confidentiality. Advise witnesses that they should likewise treat the matter confidentially. Do not share details of the investigation with those who do not have a need to know.

Implement the Appropriate Response Procedures As Necessary.

- Non-Emergency (threatening) Response Procedure
- Emergency Response Procedure
- Follow-up Emergency Response Procedure

Prepare Contact Cards.

- Prepare and distribute a "contact card" (wallet-sized, laminated card of names and phone numbers) to assist managers in accessing appropriate numbers quickly in an emergency.

- Contact information must include: 911 (police, fire, ambulance), DAS Statewide Security, building security, state police, agency head and deputies, HR office, EAP provider.
- Optional information may include: Public Information Officer (PIO), other personnel appropriate to your agency's organizational structure.
- An accompanying transmittal letter to appropriate staff will help to put the contact card in context.
- Contact cards for Agency Heads and Agency HR staff's should also include these phone numbers to use as required in the case of an emergency:
 - Governor's office
 - Desk Trooper at the Capitol (860) 524-7307
 - Trooper at Residence (860) 523-7014
 - Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection
 - (860) 685-8000
 - Outside business hours (860) 685- 8190
 - DAS Bureau of Facilities Management Statewide Security
 - (860) 713-5555
 - Outside business hours (860) 508-8223

Establish Agency's Threat Assessment Team.

- Establish a Threat Assessment Team (TAT) to handle workplace violence complaints.
- Team members may include: HR professional, EAP provider, legal counsel, representative from OLR (available for consultation as needed), ad hoc manager of the person reporting the incident, union official, internal security
- Three major functions of the team include: identifying the potential for violence in your organization, determining ways to prevent potentially violent incidents, and responding to individual acts of violence.

Assess Training and Education.

- Assess training needs of agency employees, including HR staff, and notify appropriate DAS staff of agency training needs.
- Note that Public Act 11-33, passed in the Regular 2011 legislative session, mandates that all new state employees hired after January 1, 2012 take DAS-sponsored workplace violence prevention training within six months from the date of hire, and all full-time employees employed prior to January 1, 2012 must take the training at some point if they have not already done so.

Implement Ongoing Workplace Assessments and Prevention Strategies.

- Continually review internal workplace assessment of agency management style, human resource practices (including disciplinary meetings/hearings), and facility security measures.
- Regularly conduct review of emergency and non-emergency (threatening) incidents. Monitor whether the policy and response procedures are being implemented effectively and take appropriate actions.